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Great Rift valley, walled in on the east by the Livingstone mountains, which rise to 10,000 feet, and on the west by the rather lower Ndali hills. It is blocked to the north-west by Rungwe volcano and the Poroto mountains; the volcano rises from the floor of the Rift to nearly 10,000 feet, and the lowest pass over the Poroto mountains is 8,000 feet. Scattered throughout the hills are a number of small lakes formed in the craters of old volcanoes, each one like a jewel set in the green of field and pasture.

The rainfall in this valley is very heavy, averaging over 100 inches in the year, and innumerable streams rush down the mountain slopes, flooding parts of the plain during the torrential rains of March and April. The dry season is short—it scarcely exists in the hills—and such a rainfall, combined with skilful cultivation and stock-breeding, makes a large population possible. The average density for Rungwe district is over eighty persons to the square mile; the population is most concentrated on the Lake-shore plain, but stretches up into the hills to 6,000 feet. South of the Songwe the rainfall is much less—at Karonga it averages only 45 inches a year—and the country supports a smaller population, the average density for Ngonde being less than fifteen persons to the square mile.

The Nyakyusa grow a variety of crops of which the chief are bananas and plantains, finger millet, maize, cow-peas, coco-yams, cassava, sweet potatoes, ground-nuts, cucurbits and, recently, rice and coffee. They also breed short-horned, humped, cattle which are carefully stalled at night, and hand-dressed to keep them free from ticks. Banana plantations stretch mile upon mile through the plain and along the crests of the ridges.[1] In them are hidden the villages, often so close together that the boundaries between them are not obvious. On the fringes of the bananas are the tilled fields, and beyond the fields the open pasture land. Unlike most of their neighbours in Central Africa the Nyakyusa practise fixed, not shifting, cultivation, and the land is kept in good heart by green manuring, rotation of crops, and periodic fallows.[2] Only in the cultivation of finger millet, cow-peas, and pumpkins,

[1] J. F. Elton, *The Lakes and Mountains of Eastern and Central Africa* (1879), pp. 330–1, and D. Kerr-Cross, op. cit., pp. 283–6, comment on their great extent.

[2] According to the Nyakyusa themselves the productivity of their fields is slowly diminishing. Most of them attribute this to the neglect of traditional rituals. We do not know how far their observations are objective, and how far they are biased by the tendency to glorify the past. D. H. Thwaites, in his article

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planted at the break of the rains, and of the new crop, rice, is a seed-bed of ash prepared, and then it is grass and scrub which is burned; they do not fell or pollard trees to provide ash. For other crops there is no burning; the weeds are hoed in green instead; and, at a second hoeing before planting, the earth is piled into ridges or mounds to ensure drainage. Formerly, it is said, the chiefs insisted that the ridges on slopes should be made contourwise, and recently this law has been revived. Elton, the first European to travel through the area, observed that there was 'terraced cultivation everywhere';[1] and the ridges do in fact look like terracing from a distance.

Hoeing is the work of men and boys; only quite recently have a few women, whose husbands are away in European employment, begun to hoe for themselves. And most men hoe for three or four hours a day during the greater part of the year, for crops are planted in succession. Neither old age nor high status excuses a man from this duty. Even the chief Mwaipopo, who was already grown up when the Europeans arrived in his country, hoed regularly in his fields during the years 1935–8. Iron hoes were made by Nyakyusa smiths from iron obtained from the Kinga,[2] but they were scarce, and some men had to use wooden hoes such as many of the women still have for weeding (*vide* Plate VII). The women are solely responsible for sowing, weeding, and reaping.

Cattle are fairly numerous:[3] few men over twenty-five nowadays own none, and many older men have four or five cows in their stalls. Long ago, we were told, cattle were scarcer, some men having to marry without them, but Cotterill (1876)[4] and Kerr-Cross (1890)[5] both said 'cattle abound' in Nyakyusa coun-

on 'Wanyakyusa Agriculture' (*The East African Agricultural Journal*, April 1944), states that 'though the soil is not being eroded to any great extent it is still being impoverished'.

[1] Elton, op. cit., pp. 326, 330.

[2] Thomson, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 272–3. Possibly iron was also obtained from the west. Kerr Cross (op. cit. p. 289) saw large foundries in Nyika country before 1890. *cf.* Elton, op. cit., p. 321 and map at the end.

[3] No census of the cattle in the district had been taken when we were among the Nyakyusa. D. H. Thwaites, op. cit., states that, 'The number of cattle in the district (Rungwe) in the 1941 census was about 2.3 head per taxpayer or 33 head per square mile'.

[4] H. B. Cotterill, 'On the Nyasa and a Journey from the North End to Zanzibar', *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. XXII (1878).

[5] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Crater-lakes north of Lake Nyasa', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. V (1895), p. 119.

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231 try, and Lugard speaks of 'enormous herds' in 1888[1] which a rinderpest epidemic decimated in 1892.[2] A few Kukwe keep one or two sheep, but we saw no goats at all in Rungwe district,[3] and neither sheep nor goats figure in ritual: cattle and fowls provide flesh for sacrifice. Every woman keeps fowls, as every man seeks to own cattle.

262 With curds and meat from their cattle, with fowls, fish, bananas, grain, pulses, roots and curcurbits, as well as bean tops and pumpkin tops, and—less generally—fruit, the Nyakyusa are exceptionally well fed. Since the dry season is so short and two crops of maize and pulses are grown in the year, there are no 'hunger months' such as the Bemba and many other African peoples experience. Shortages and famine occur, but rarely. All the early travellers comment on the quantities of food available in Nyakyusa country.[4]

131 *c. Relations with the outside world*

131 171 Perhaps the most significant fact in the history of the Nyakyusa is their long isolation, which is mainly the result of their geographical position. Surrounded on three sides by high mountains, and on the fourth by the stormy head waters of the Lake,[5] the district was largely cut off from the outside world. Slave caravans passed to the north, the west, and the south, but never through Nyakyusa country; and though they were repeatedly attacked by the Sangu, who are said to have raided as far as the Nyasa plain,[6] and several times by the Ngoni, the Nyakyusa repulsed both peoples. Certain of the Kukwe chiefs were forced for a period to pay tribute to the Sangu chief, Merere; but according to their own account none did so for long, and some never paid at all. Kerr-Cross comments on the contrast before 1890 between the unfortified villages of the Nyakyusa and Ndali, and those of the Lambya and Nyika, who, living in open country and harried

[1] Lugard, op. cit., p. 131.

[2] H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa* (1897), p. 430; D. Kerr-Cross, op. cit., p. 119.

[3] Fotheringham, *op. cit.*, pp. 1, 25, mentions goats in Ngonde.

[4] See especially, Thomson, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 268, 274; Lugard, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 131.

[5] In 1946 a Lake steamer, the *Vipya*, sank in a storm near Karonga with heavy loss of life.

[6] Kerr Cross, op. cit., pp. 119-20.

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CHAPTER II

VILLAGE ORGANIZATION

621 591 NYAKYUSA villages (*ifipanga*)[1] are formed by groups of boys or men, all roughly of the same age, together with the wives and young children of those who are married. Women belong to the villages of their husbands, young children to those of their fathers. Girls live at home until they are betrothed, after which they visit their future husbands periodically, and soon after puberty each joins her husband in his village. Boys, who marry later in life, leave home at about the age of ten or eleven and set up villages of their own.

a. The genesis of the village

857 ●231 Between the ages of about six and eleven boys sleep at their fathers' houses and herd their fathers' cattle. This is a full-time, if not a very arduous, occupation. The cattle are driven out about an hour or two after sunrise and return to be milked about 1 p.m.; after an hour they are again driven out and do not come back until sunset. The cattle of a group of neighbours, usually five to ten,[2] are herded together by their young sons; and so these boys spend all day together for several years of their lives. This group of boys is the germ of the future age-village; it is a community with a common activity in the herding of the cattle, with a leader and laws and customs of its own.[3]

591 561 857 When the boys reach the age of ten or eleven, two important changes usually take place in their lives. Firstly, they leave the herding of cows to their younger brothers, and themselves begin the business of hoeing the fields which will occupy them until they die; secondly, they no longer sleep in the houses of their fathers but join an age-village of boys. Nowadays the two changes usually, but not always, take place at the same time, and well before puberty.

[1] cf. Xhosa *intanga*, 'a company of persons or animals of equal age'.

[2] The herd group is smaller in young men's villages where few are cattle-owners, and a very rich man occasionally herds his cattle alone.

[3] G. and M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, pp. 51–3.

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Before the establishment of peace by European authority, however, cattle were commonly herded by young men, armed, and only the calves were entrusted to boys, who herded them near the homesteads; therefore moving to a boys' village did not coincide with the change of occupation. Even to-day it is not uncommon for some boys who have reached puberty to be found herding cattle. One we knew herded his father's cattle although he had reached puberty, because he had no younger brothers old enough to take over, and there were only five or six boys in his herd-group altogether. There are also cases where special circumstances put the age of moving later. In one age-village the boys leave home a little later than usual because there are leopards about and it is dangerous for small boys to walk from the village of their fathers to that of the boys, after dark.

When a number of the sons of a village of married men have reached the right age, their fathers give them a piece of land to one side of the parent village on which to build. There they build little huts of reeds for themselves, sufficiently well thatched to keep out the heavy rain, and there they sleep (*vide* Plate II). The building of the huts on this land begins in a playful manner, before the boys move. While they are still herding cows and sleeping at home they build miniature huts there in their spare time, but do not sleep in them. When they move they build slightly more substantial huts with better thatch. At the beginning, when a group of boys starts a new village, or when boys join one already formed, they do not all have huts for themselves: two or three friends share a hut. But later, as they grow older, each builds for himself.

Until he marries each boy hoes his father's fields in his father's village and eats food cooked by his own mother at his father's house, but he sleeps with his friends. Thus between the time when he leaves home and his marriage each is a member of two villages: economically he still belongs to that of his father; socially to that of his own contemporaries. Though bachelors eat at their parents' home, it is very rarely that they do not eat in the company of their own friends. A bachelor does not simply go home to eat by himself, but a group of bachelors, friends living in the same boys' village, go round together eating at the house of each one's mother in turn.

In an age-village of married men there are always several

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to those crops, production of which is now expanding—beans, groundnuts, coffee and rice—even though the latter is planted like millet in a seed-bed of ash. The cultivation of rice is on a commercial basis. A small number of men own ploughs which they hire out for preparing rice-fields, and the weeding and reaping is also often done by hired labour. For the hulling, grading, and marketing of coffee the Agricultural Department has established a coffee co-operative, to which all native-grown coffee is sold, but in this organization villages as such play no part.

d. Herding

In each village there are, as we have seen, several herd-groups, five to ten neighbours herding their cattle together. This association is voluntary, but it is usual for members of adjoining homesteads to co-operate—special friends in a village tend to build together—and the group is more or less stable. All the boys of appropriate age (six to eleven) go to herd, even though there is one son of their father already in the group, and when a man has cattle, but no sons of an age to herd, he may leave his cattle to be looked after by the sons of neighbours. As one old man put it: 'My cows are herded by other men's sons, but I give them neither milk nor payment, it is not done in this country. When I beget a son he will herd too.' There is thus considerable give-and-take between fellow members of the group. Among Christians, and those pagans who wish their sons to go to school, the herds take shifts, half attending the morning session of school, and half the afternoon session. Formerly, young men armed with spears herded the cattle for fear of raids, while boys herded the calves which grazed near the villages. The same young men used to herd and hoe, taking it in turn, or hoeing in the late afternoon when the cattle grazed near the villages and could be herded by the youngsters. The cattle were trained to follow the call of a herdsman and in case of danger were quickly led away and hidden.[1]

In the large villages of the plain an assistant headman, one of whose functions is the care of cattle, is connected with each herd-group. In his homestead, under the bananas, a smoky fire is kept going during the heat of the day, and there the cattle of the group

[1] D. Kerr-Cross, op. cit., p. 121; F. L. M. Moir, op. cit., p. 93.

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stand protected from insects: hence his title 'he of the heap of hot ashes' (*ngwakyewa*, *vide supra*, p. 34). The protection of their cattle from raiders by day, and witches by night, was one of the main co-operative activities of the village, and each herd-group within the village was particularly concerned with the protection of its own cattle. For the boys of one herd-group the association is very close since they are together on the pasturage for the greater part of the day. Friendships then formed sometimes last a lifetime.

A few rich men choose to herd their cattle separately from those of their neighbours. 'They are the men who have many cattle! They want to show off their herd, so that men may say: "That's the herd of so and so."' Sometimes their sons, against orders, foregather with other herd-boys on the pasturage, but they are careful to bring home the herds separately. We knew three men near Rungwe who were spoken of as herding their cattle separately, though in fact their sons often joined friends in the pasturage. To herd alone is regarded as somewhat ostentatious,[1] and only a few individuals do it.

Many rich men do not even keep all their cattle at their homesteads for fear of the jealous witchcraft of their neighbours. Instead, they disperse their herds among friends in other villages (of their own or neighbouring chiefdoms) believing that the cattle may in that way escape danger. Porokoto explained: 'We place cattle with friends (*ubufyfye*) on account of sickness and death. Supposing I have three or four cows, and they all calf, but the calves die, then I place the cows with friends. People say: "The cows will escape in another village or chiefdom." If, when cattle die and are cut up, wounds are found in their stomachs,[2] then the owner places the others with friends.' Not all of them are sent to the same place.

The fear of witchcraft was traditionally, and is still, the main reason for placing out cattle, but nowadays they are sent away for other reasons also: Nyakyusa living around Rungwe often send cattle to friends on the other side of the mountains in Mbeya district, where grazing is particularly good, and wealthy Christians place out cattle because their wives, working single-handed,

[1] A beast which grows others may be handed apart without any imputation of pride to the owner.

[2] Taken as evidence that they have been killed by witchcraft, *vide infra*, p. 116.

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find the cleaning of byres in which many cattle are stalled, very arduous. A pagan who has many cattle always has more than one wife.

Thus, herding together was traditionally, and still is, one of the main common activities of neighbours in a village; most cattle are herded with those of neighbours, but there is a measure of co-operation with relatives and personal friends of other villages. It is likely that the practice of placing cattle with friends of other villages is becoming more common.

c. Hunting and fishing

From the point of view of village co-operation, hunting and fishing are relatively unimportant, for, in the first place, game and fish provide the Nyakyusa with prized foods to eat as relish with the staple bananas, roots, and cereals, rather than with main items of diet; and secondly, hunting and fishing are not primarily village enterprises.

Most fishing is done by men, individually, each keeping his own catch; but groups of herd-boys or young men sometimes co-operate to divert a branch of a stream temporarily, so that they may tickle the fish stranded in the shallow pools. They choose a place where a stream divides naturally, and block one channel with stones; but such enterprises are on a small scale. Periodically however, when fish were plentiful, communal fishing was organised during the dry season. The seeds of a certain legume, grown for the purpose, were thrown into the river to stupefy the fish. Men, women, and children waited some way down the stream with hand-nets, and when, an hour or two after the poison had been put in, the fish began to float down stupefied, they were easily netted. The poisoning was organised by the chief and village headmen and all the villages of the chiefdom participated, as well as those from neighbouring chiefdoms, when their chiefs were on good terms. Friends naturally went together, but the various villages did not act as separate units as they do in a communal hunt. Communal fishing never occurred regularly, for if fish were scarce the chief might forbid it for a number of years, and it is now rare, since poisoning the rivers has been forbidden by the Administration. We heard of only one such fishing during our stay in Nyakyusa country.

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ing audiences watch their friends in the detachment of the King's African Rifles at bayonet drill in Mwaiko.[1]

Display is felt to be particularly appropriate to young people, and bachelors were held to be the fiercest warriors, but neither dancing nor fighting was confined to young men. The chief Mwaipopo (Plate V) was famous as a skilful and ardent dancer when over seventy, and the leader in war was the senior headman of the country, who, if not already married when he took office, had to marry almost immediately, since his wife shared in the ritual of establishing his house. Furthermore the villages of married men of the ruling generation fought, as well as the villages of their bachelor brothers and sons.

That the Nyakyusa had some skill in warfare is certain, for they defeated and drove off Ngoni raiders and warriors of the Sangu chief Mwaya,[2] but they never developed a military kingdom like that of the Bemba to the west, or the Hehe to the east, nor did they raid at large like the Masai and Ngoni. Their geographical position sheltered them very considerably from outside attack, and discouraged raiding abroad. They confined themselves mostly to lifting the cattle of neighbouring chiefdoms.

Cattle, whether they be spoils of war or inherited wealth, are displayed. Not only does a long byre add to the dignity of a homestead, but, when there is some ceremony at the home of a rich man, he shows off his herd by driving it round and round the homestead. At other times his sons gallop it along the village street, the iron bells with which the animals are adorned ringing merrily. Nyakyusa smiths make cow-bells in sets,[3] to chime in harmony, and the aim of a rich man is to own a set of bells which ring a full chime, and a herd large enough to carry them. Nowadays those who own bicycles display them in the same sort of way, riding round and round the homestead at a ceremony, and ringing the bells madly.

Unlike the enjoyment of good company (*ukunonga*), display

[1] This detachment was not supposed to include Nyakyusa who were recruited for a detachment stationed outside the district, but in fact Nyakyusa got in by posing as men from Ngonde, Nyasaland.

[2] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Centre-lakes north of Lake Nyasa', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. V (1895), p. 119-20; Lugard, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 56, speaks of the Nyakyusa as 'brave in war'.

[3] We deposited a set in the Livingstone Memorial Museum, Livingstone, N. Rhodesia.

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usually has a separate hut for its girls, to which, we were told, their lovers come secretly by night.

Nyakyusa informants connected the existence of girls' houses with the marriage age. In Ngonde the marriage age of girls is much higher than it is among the Nyakyusa, partly because there are many more Christians (45 per cent as against 16 per cent) who do not allow polygyny, partly because even the girls from pagan families in Ngonde dislike marrying a polygynist, and partly because a much higher percentage of young men are away at work, than from Nyakyusa country. Formerly, they said, the marriage age was higher among the Nyakyusa also, and then the Nyakyusa had *isaka*. It is certain that among the Nyakyusa betrothal of a girl has long taken place before puberty, for the husband plays an essential part in the puberty ritual, and there were always some girls who were betrothed when quite tiny; but the evidence is fairly clear that the average age of betrothal among the pagans has been going down. The Nyakyusa view is that no man in his senses, who is able to marry, will engage a little girl of eight if he can find one approaching puberty, and it is the scarcity of wives that makes men 'marry' little girls. It is also clear that the number of cattle in the country, and their rate of circulation, has increased during the last two decades, so there are 'too many cattle chasing too few brides' with the result that the marriage age of girls has fallen, and the number of cattle given at marriage has increased.

Once she is betrothed, a girl's 'husband' has exclusive sexual rights over her, and she cannot entertain lovers in the *isaka*. The only two occasions on which she may flirt and have external relations with a man other than her husband, are during an initiation ceremony, when the girls of the village who have not yet reached puberty sleep with their fellow who is being initiated, and there entertain young men, and when she accompanies a bride to her husband's house. A bridegroom is expected to have external relations with his wife's two friends, as well as with his wife, on the night they bring her to his house. Love-making at the initiation-marriage ritual is held to be 'part of the ritual' and a means of sex education, and a husband can make no complaint about his 'wife' receiving lovers then, provided that penetration does not take place.

Homosexual practices are said to be very common in the boys'

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

One by one the villagers emerge from the houses, and sit in the sun, greeting neighbours with a polite 572 "Have you slept well?" if there are any neighbours [576] near. Then the husband milks the cattle, and the boys come to drive them out to the pasture, where they will remain until the early afternoon, when they are again milked.

Generally the cattle sleep in the same house as their 231 owners, tied up to stakes fixed deep in the floor; but 592 where there are grown-up sons not yet married, a separate house is built in which the parents sleep with the little ones, while the young men guard the cattle from raiding thieves.

The bed is frequently no more than a mat spread 573 on the mud floor, with a single blanket for covering, and no pillow, unless it is a piece of roughly trimmed wood. The more prosperous natives, earning good pay in the employment of Europeans, have well-made beds fully equipped, in many cases even with mosquito nets hung from the roof. The poorer consider that they have made a great step forward if they have been able to save up enough money to buy a single blanket, and not seldom even that belongs to the father, the mother and children having to be content with meagre coverings of calico or grass mats. But [354] the house is warm, often too warm, for the fire is always burning, the door is closed, there are no windows, and there is no ventilation in the roof; and all the inmates sleep with their feet to the fire, which is in the middle of the floor.

Here and there one will come upon rows of tiny 342 houses, each built and occupied by two or three small 561

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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241 sheer hard work makes men and women look thin and
512 haggard. Work stops about noon; the women go home to attend to the food, the men to see to the cattle which the smaller boys have been looking after
231 during the day. The milking is always done by the
512 men; it is not women's work as with us. If there are
[462] flies about, and there usually are, the cows need no invitation to thrust their heads into the column of acrid smoke that arises from a dung fire, kindled for the purpose. The rest of the afternoon is filled either with small duties, basket mending, net work, some slight repairs to a canoe, rope making, house repairing; or it may be there is a lawsuit to be settled, and every idler will make a point of being present.

512 By the time food is over, night has closed in. If
[576] the night is dark, one after another slips away with a friendly "May you sleep well," and silence reigns until morning. Unless it is suddenly broken by the roar of a lion or the growl of a leopard; and then the young men, who sleep with the cattle, rush out with spears and clubs and wild shouting to drive off the intruder, while the others raise a weird cry within the houses. Should the lion take refuge in a thicket and refuse to be driven off, a small party may slip round to the nearest white man, if he is not too far away, to beg him either to lend them a rifle, or to
512 come himself to their aid. In the warm moonlight
535 nights, however, other noises fill the ear. The young people gather for a dance, and the drum fills the night air with its interminable tum tum tum, now soft and

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER VIII

Domestic Animals: Agriculture

AMONG the Konde the cow is queen. The people are reasonably musical, but no sound strikes more pleasantly upon their ears than the raucous bellowing of cow and calf as they return from the pasturelands in the early afternoon. No Irishman ever rejoiced in his pigs as the Konde do in their cattle. The young men sleep with them; the children play with them. The cow pays the tax and finds the wife; she compensates for injuries and wipes out insults. Feuds and bonds are based on and settled by cattle. They are the cause of three-quarters of the crimes, and three-quarters of the virtues of the people; they are prolific in lawsuits before the European magistrate and the native chief. Indeed, the song of the cow and the Konde might be extended to the dimensions of a small epic. The great majority of the men invest all their spare cash in cattle, convinced that they get at once greater security and higher interest than in any other investment open to them. The total number possessed by the tribe is not less than one hundred thousand head.

Every animal in a herd answers to its own name,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

231 and will follow the caller wherever he goes. They come to be milked morning and evening, and no cow moves until her name is called. The greatest insult that can be offered to a man is to sprinkle milk on the road behind him as he passes, suggesting, "You are too incompetent to provide yourself and your family with milk to drink; I can spare some to mock you with." And each man is jealous of the quality of his herd. A year or two ago, a wedding party went to [579] pay over a cow to the bride's father. It was not a high-class animal: a bystander threw a taunt, and in the fight which followed, two men were killed, and a number wounded.

422 The man is the owner of the cattle as a rule. It is rare for the wife to own any; but sometimes a father will make his daughter a present of a cow, which becomes hers absolutely, to pass, with its increase, to her son at her death or his marriage. The husband also may set a cow apart for his wife, but it returns to him in case of divorce.

231 857 During the day the cattle are herded by the village boys, each family sending one or two in turn to the work. They have a thoroughly good time, though for the smaller boys it is rather a testing time of moral and muscle, for they have a severe apprentice-234 ship to serve. Cows are milked by the owner usually twice a day. No one ever salutes a man while so engaged; if the milk stops, he will be accused of witchcraft. A visitor arriving at milking time will sit down and wait, neither he nor his host taking any notice of each other until the cow that is being milked

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

000 tion, brought me a grass mat to lie on, and then ran to fetch a great dish of *amasulu*, as the thick milk is called. Only once have I eaten more welcome food; when, having been obliged to make a long detour, I lost touch with my food boxes, and got two cobs of soft, juicy maize from a garden I was passing through. That, I think, was the most delicious meal I ever made.

231 Polling of cattle is practised, but only for special reasons; if the animal is bad-tempered, or if the horns grow into the face, or if it is desired to give the cow a youthful appearance with a view to a good sale. The polling is done by specialists, but the cow, carefully bound, is held by the owner himself. Fine-looking horns are scraped to preserve their appearance. There is no gelding of bullocks, as the animals are never used for work of any kind; though European planters and others have proved that they respond well to training.

232 A people so keen on cattle rearing have naturally developed some skill in the treatment of the various ills that afflict their stocks. Sympathetic magic plays a considerable part in the treatment. If a cow drops one bull-calf after another, the doctor will give the owner a medicine made into four great pills. Then, if his own wife did not have a daughter as her first-born, the owner engages the services of a woman who did. This daughter she takes upon her back, and, while the owner forcibly opens the mouth of the cow, she drops the pills into it. Taking another supply in her hand, she passes it over the back of the cow from

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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696 rarely appeals, convinced, though without reason, that the magistrate will pooh-pooh his story.

231 754 In 1920 a lake-shore chief was fined a large number of cattle ; and the animals, removed to the hills where the veterinary officer lived, did not thrive. The reason is no doubt to be found in the different climate ; but the natives give two quite different ones : many of them were bewitched ; and others were given a slow-working poison by owners who resented the fine. But the fact that many natives willingly bought them when offered for sale seems to indicate not all held the two theories referred to.

231 157 When an epidemic carries off large numbers of cattle, the Konde assume a fatalistic attitude. There is nothing to be done : why worry ? In 1894 immense numbers of cattle died of rinderpest. After learning by divination that neither spirits nor sorcerers had anything to do with it, the people put it down to *Mwanjebe*, a troublesome godlet of the neighbouring Kamanga tribe, against whom there was no appeal, and no protection. They assume the same fatalistic attitude to the interference of the white man, and a supreme distrust of all kinds of injections has arisen in their minds, since the widespread injections of 1918, when many of their cattle died. The chiefs are credited with saying on that occasion, " If the white man wishes to inject, let him inject ! Why make him angry ? Let the cattle die rather." If this is true, it is a testimony to the immense personal prestige of the white man, but is hardly flattering to his veterinary skill. A warning was issued that the flesh of cattle

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

killed by rinderpest should not be eaten, but the injunction was disregarded, with fatal results, and again the fatalistic attitude in the presence of the all-powerful white man revealed itself: "If we die, that is the white man's affair. They wish to kill us." It is useless to point to the recent increase of cattle in the district. The reply always is that the deterioration in quality, which began with the coming of the white man, and has continued ever since, more than balances the increase in numbers.

In comparison with cattle, other animals are of small importance. Sheep and goats are reared in small numbers, and belong to the man, very much as cattle do. Fowls belong to any member of the family, and each owns what he sells them for. There are many breeds of dogs, formerly used for hunting, but now mostly as watchdogs, in view of the prevalence of thieving. Dogs are as a rule treated with neglect, and pick up a living as best they can from the garbage around the doors. With a few exceptions they are cowardly brutes, possibly a natural result of their vile treatment. Occasionally one will come upon a man who has well-fed, well-cared-for dogs, and is very proud of their intelligence and courage, either in keeping off thieves or in tending cattle. The story of the two dogs which were shown the limits within which their master's cattle might feed, and kept them strictly within bounds, is not, perhaps, without parallel in other lands.

There is a very remarkable tradition that in the old days of war, and especially during the Angoni raids,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

231 a cow about to be delivered of a calf was rushed down to running water, and the calf, when delivered, immediately submerged. Then cow and owner ran for their lives, and when the scourge had passed over, the owner, if he survived, took the calf out of the water, resuscitated it, and let it go. The explanation given to me by a medical colleague of the conditions under which such a thing is possible, render it highly probable that if ever it occurred at all, it must have been very rarely, and even less in times of war than in times of peace. What is interesting, however, is the fact that the physiological possibility of it is known to the natives. I have not met anyone who has seen it done.

241 771 *Agriculture.*—St. Paul would almost certainly have told the Konde that they were "too religious"; not because he would have seen tokens of their religiousness in the streets and villages; no mere passer-by, and no indifferent foreigner, ever sees that. One must look deep, and live long among them, before that side of their life reveals itself to him with any fulness. There is hardly an act of theirs that is not accompanied by a ceremony of some kind, if that is religion, and to them it undoubtedly is. Agriculture is a highly religious occupation on that view, but hardly more so than many others. Leaving native Christians aside, the great majority of the people consult a diviner before beginning to hoe. He may say that all is well; or he may discover that some spirit stands in the way of a good crop, and must be propitiated; or that a certain piece of ground is bewitched, and no good will come of hoeing it until the spell has been removed.

[787] 241 782

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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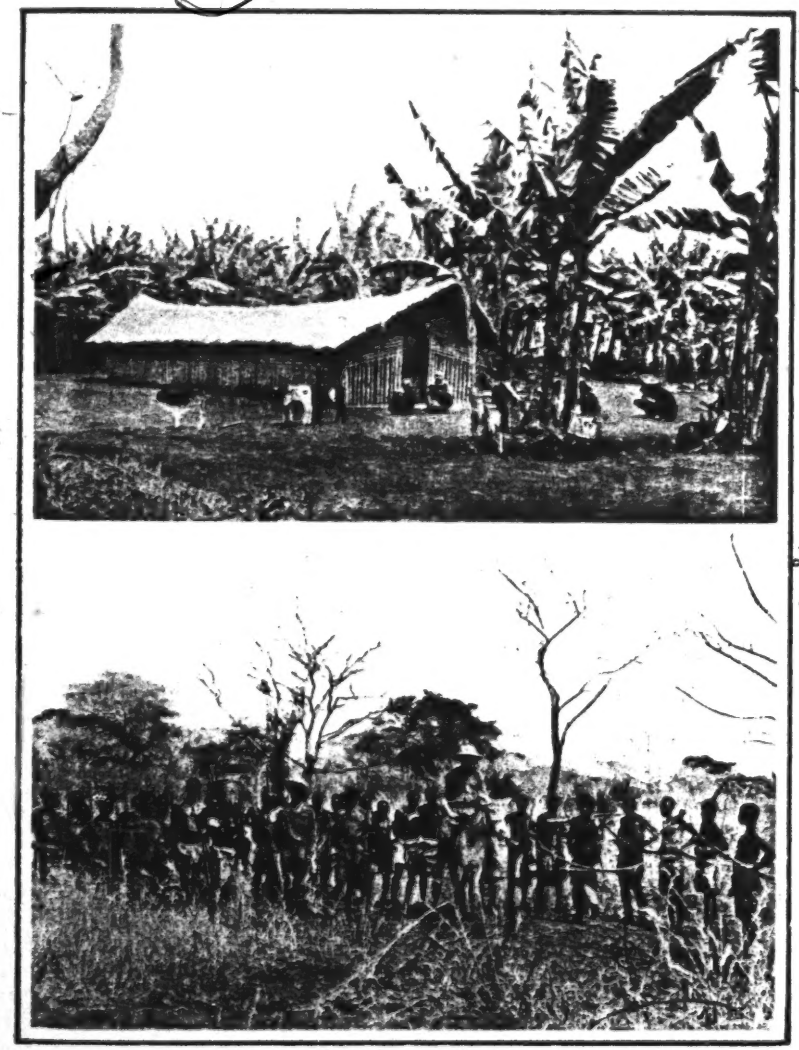

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A KONDE HUT.

Leisureliness is the key note of Konde life, and there is always time to sit down for the welcome chat about cattle, crops, children, or the white man, whose strange ways are of unfailing interest.

LION HUNTING.

The presence of a lion in a district causes a great scare, and the chief may call up all able-bodied men, armed with spears, clubs and bows, to the hunt. The lion—or leopard—is sometimes seized alive and clubbed or speared to death. The presence of a white man with a rifle gives increased courage to the hunters.

[Facing p. 176]

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

241 The use of cattle dung as manure is a novelty now used in the cultivation of coffee, but not on gardens unless land is beginning to be scarce. Banana cultivation is a characteristic feature of Ngonde as well as of Nyakyusa economic life.[1] Each homestead in a village includes the houses of a man and his wives, his banana groves, coffee-trees planted under the bananas, and also plots of beans, ground-nuts, &c. The main gardens of the household lie at some distance. Each year different types of gardens are hoed together by groups of villagers, millet in one place, maize and beans in another, so that the main gardens of any particular household are scattered. The clearing and hoeing fall to the man and his sons, and the wives are then given portions of their own to plant. Traditionally women never used to hoe at all.

The rights of a woman to dispose of her crops vary. Millet and rice, the two most valuable crops, are stored by the man and belong to him. The woman is the effective owner of all other crops on her plot, and stores them in her own house. Crops are used for food, beer, and hospitality, for making gifts, as well as for sale or barter, to obtain salt, pots, clothes, and cattle. There is a sharp division of property between co-wives. Not only garden land, but also banana-trees are divided between them. The husband often keeps a separate plot of bananas and cassava over which he has full rights of ownership. The farming unit is the family, but communal hoeing parties are organized two or three times a year, food and beer being offered to the workers.[2]

243 On the lake-shore plain rice is cultivated. The Ngonde plain is the main rice-growing area of Nyasaland. Floods in the rainy season make possible the cultivation of lowland rice, or paddy, which is superior in yield to upland grown crops. The most fertile areas are usually flooded during the rainy period of December–April, so as to be unfitted for the cultivation of other food crops at that time. But the Ngonde construct huge mound-like ridges in their newly harvested rice gardens, and plant on them subsidiary crops—maize, beans, sweet potatoes, cassava, or cotton. When these are harvested the garden is levelled again in readiness for another rice crop. Harvesting of rice and winnowing is usually women's work.[3] The crops are stored when threshed but unhulled, or unthreshed. They are milled by pestle and mortar. The rice is marketed with Indian traders in Blantyre and Limbe townships.[4]

CATTLE.

● 231 Cattle take a foremost place in *Ngonde* economy, and milk is an important article of diet. Ngonde herdsmen were much in request in Shire province.[5]

Nyakyusa cattle are tied up at night in the dwelling houses,[6] and are herded in the day by small boys. Milking is invariably done by the men; the women are not allowed to have anything to do with cattle.[7] Every year at the end of the dry season, in October or November, some of the pastures are fired to bring out the new shoots at the first rains. This is the only use of burning in their economy.[8] The rinderpest outbreak of 1896 decimated the herds,[9] but since then the number of cattle has increased considerably, numbering over 33,000 head in 1931 and about 40,000 head in 1938,

[1] Murray, 1932, p. 202.
[2] Wilson, 3, 1938, pp. 16–29.
[3] Barker, 1934.
[4] Murray, 1932, p. 206.
[5] Johnston, 1897, p. 431; Murray, 1932, pp. 205 and 209.
[6] Murray, 1932, p. 209, states that Ngonde cattle and herdsmen sleep together in long rectangular huts.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Wilson, 3, 1938, p. 8.
[9] Johnston, 1897, p. 431.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

231 according to the *Bell Report*. Cattle and hides are exported to Tanganyika.[1] The *Nyamwanga* herds were reduced, partly by Bemba raids, and partly by rinderpest.[2]

Domestic Architecture

341 361 *Ngonde* homesteads are famous in Nyasaland for their peculiar style and neatness of execution. They are made of bamboos, specially grown for the purpose. They are oblong, with the ends slightly tapering upwards so that they present a ship-like appearance. The huts are erected in two lines facing each other, at a distance of about 30 yards. This centre street is kept scrupulously clean.[3] The *Nyakusa* live in round or long huts of bamboo or grass.[4] *Kinga* homesteads are scattered; they live in round huts of bamboo and straw.[5] The *Iwa* formerly lived in large stockaded villages, but these are now broken up.[6]

Specialization and Trade

326 The Ngonde were accomplished iron-workers; iron was dug, smelted, and made into hoes and spears.[7] The Iwa were formerly noted as iron-workers. Both they and the Nyamwanga grow tobacco on a large scale.[8]

286 501 226 A rough kind of cloth was made on native looms. The Ngonde made hollowed canoes, but were not good sailors. In fishing they used poison, hooks, nets, and traps. Pottery and basket-making were carried on.[9]

[77] 439 643 The Ngonde were the most civilized of this cluster of tribes, owing to their closer contact with Arab and Swahili traders who used the lake as a waterway.[10] The Nyamwanga also had opportunities of contact with Arab and Swahili traders at the south end of Lake Tanganyika,[11] but information about the effect of this on their economic life is lacking. By comparison with the Ngonde the Nyakyusa were isolated from contact with the outside world,[12] and this is probably true of the other tribes of the group. Among the Ngonde, in spite of the political hierarchy and central religious authority of Kyungu, economic links between separate local groups were few. The ivory trade was a source of wealth for the Kyungu and for the nobles of Ngonde at Mbande, but its benefits had a strictly limited effect on the rest of the people. The economic links between the capital and the chiefdoms followed the lines of the political system. The income of Kyungu in slaves and cattle depended on the judicial process and on warfare. He had a semi-monopoly of the ivory of the country (the right tusk of every elephant killed was his). His expenditure consisted of entertainment for all important visitors to the capital, and gifts of cloths, obtained through the ivory trade, to nobles and chiefs. The first Kyungu gave head-cloths to the indigenous rulers, who, in accepting them, accepted his overlordship, and the practice was continued every time a new chief or territorial noble succeeded to office. The nobles of Ngonde got cloths every time the Arab traders came. Chiefs bringing food to Mbande, the capital, were

[1] *Bell Report*, pp. 100–3; Aplin, 1931.
[2] Gouldsbury and Sheane, 1911, p. 12.
[3] Kerr-Cross, 1894; Murray, 1932, pp. 210–11.
[4] *Handbook of German East Africa*, p. 68.
[5] Ibid., p. 64.
[6] Gouldsbury and Sheane, 1911, p. 12.
[7] Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 146–8; Kerr-Cross, 1894, p. 189.
[8] Gouldsbury and Sheane, 1911, p. 12.
[9] Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 146, 149, 151–2.
[10] Wilson, 5, 1939, p. 44.
[11] Ibid., 3, 1938, p. 15.
[12] Coxhead, 1914, p. 44.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

131 twenty miles from Lake Nyasa (1,500 feet). A little compact country,
133 secluded until very recently from any effective external contacts, slightly over 1,000 square miles in extent.[1]

132 The soil, particularly that of the higher ground in the north of the
134 Nyakyusa country, is not in itself very rich, but, as between 100 and 130 inches of rain usually fall each year, the district is one of the most fertile
[161] in the whole of Tanganyika; two crops a year are often grown on the same patch of ground, and the African population is over eighty to the square
[23] mile. There is no infected tsetse fly and cattle are the most prized possession of the Nyakyusa.

631 For historical reasons, which we will discuss in a later section, the Nyakyusa have never been united under any one paramount chief of their own, but live in a number (nearly 100 at the present day) of tiny but traditionally independent chiefdoms. For these chiefdoms the numerous streams which run down from the north into Lake Nyasa and the crests of the ridges of land between them, form natural boundaries.

133 The country, of course, is not all of equal economic value, parts of it
134 are stony and mountainous, other parts, and particularly the plain in the south, consist of deep and level soil; and the population is heavier on the plain than on the higher ground. Further, on the higher ground, there exist numerous old volcanic craters filled with rich moist soil and these, being more fertile than the surrounding land, are particularly valued by
[214] the Nyakyusa. Again, of the two chief economic crops of this district, one, coffee, can only be grown on the higher ground while the other, rice, can only be grown on or near the plain. And at every point their system of land tenure is partially determined by such physical factors as these.

3. *THE USES AND VALUE OF LAND*

311 The Nyakyusa use their land for building on, for agriculture, for pasture, for hunting and fishing; they collect firewood, reeds, thatching-grass, mushrooms and other wild vegetables there; they draw water from its streams and bathe daily in them; on their land they grow bamboos, bananas, *imisyunguti* trees[2] and coffee; they keep bees; they dance, they fight, they walk and lie down upon it; their land is both the receptacle of refuse and the location of religious ritual, while their doctors continually wander over its surface in search of magical medicines.

Not all these uses of land give rise to laws, moral rules or conventions, but only those uses which tend to lead men into conflict with one another or into mutual embarrassment. The only reasons for the existence of

[1] The whole of Rungwe District is 1,866 square miles, but this includes the hills of the Ndali and Lambya as well.

[2] I have not been able to discover the botanical name of this tree.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Before passing on to consider how it is that the Nyakyusa distinguish between " better " and " worse " plots and pastures we must dwell for a moment longer on the technical aspect of their present use of land.

The *chitemene* system of agriculture so common in Central Africa has never been practised by the Nyakyusa, indeed the density of the population makes it impossible ; they follow instead a system of intensive cultivation with rotation of crops. Villages are thus relatively stable and a man may, if he chooses, hoe the same ground year after year for a whole generation, letting each plot lie fallow in its turn. The great variety of crops which can be grown helps to determine the success of the Nyakyusa rotation system—maize, millet, sweet-potatoes, beans, ground-nuts, cow-peas, cassava and, in the plain, rice being their staple products. The men hoe deeply, using a long-handled iron hoe, the women weed with the aid of a short-handled wooden digging stick ; different crops are planted at different seasons and most men do some hoeing in every month of the year. Every now and again a whole block of garden land that has been worked for some years may be allowed by common consent to revert to pasture. In the pasturing of cattle the most noteworthy point is the burning of the grass-lands ; at the end of each short dry season in October or November, some of the pastures are fired so as to bring new shoots of tender grass with the first rains. The houses of a village are normally all built close together, each surrounded by bananas, with the main garden lands at some distance from them. The cattle are tied up at night in the houses and their dung is removed each morning and thrown down among the banana trees by the women of the household. The deliberate use of dung as manure is a novelty but is now general in the cultivation of coffee ; on the gardens cattle dung is not used save in that one part of the district where land is beginning to be absolutely scarce, but the grass, which in this climate grows so quickly over them, is hoed in each year as green manure.

The first consideration which, in the case of arable land, leads the Nyakyusa to value some pieces of ground above others is a scientific[1] knowledge of the properties of different kinds of soil. " The men who are skilled in choosing ground for hoeing are those who have been long familiar with the soil. They know how soils differ and that one soil is best for maize, another for sweet-potatoes, one for peas, another for beans, one for ground-nuts another for pumpkins, one for millet, another for yams. And they can tell from the grass also, that where a certain

[1] By " scientific " knowledge is meant an intelligent understanding of fact based upon observation or experiment and which is not directly determined by any ultimate religious beliefs, save only the one belief that facts are intelligible.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

he settles many legal disputes between his neighbours. The village is, both for men and women, the chief field of friendship, conversation and mutual hospitality; and its members recognize greater obligations towards one another than they do towards those outside. Before the coming of the Europeans the age-village was also a military unit, led by its own great commoner, in the constant fights between chiefdoms.

In most villages there are several herds of cattle which feed separately. The herd boys, as we have seen, thus form separate groups within the village, so also do their fathers; the boys are related in the common activity of herding, the men, owners of the herd, by their joint interest in it and their common fear of witchcraft.

In the relationships of villagers the belief in witchcraft is a constantly recurring factor. It is believed that certain people, both men and women have the power of harming their neighbours and their neighbours' cattle without taking any overt action whatever, without reciting any spells or performing any magical ritual at all.

Their influence, which is exercized at night in dreams, is only fully visible to those who are themselves endowed with this power; and to it is constantly attributed both sickness in men and the failure of cows to give milk. In this belief the elements of actual ill will and quarreling, of actual sickness and the failure of cows to give milk and of actual dream experiences are combined in a significant whole. Witches are of two kinds, they say, those who use their power rightly (*ava maŋga*) and those who use it wrongly (*avalɔsi*). The first kind are said generally to spend their dreams in trying to prevent the others from harming those whom they hate. The good witches are the "defenders of the village," and in each village the great commoner is believed to be the first among them. In each group of men whose cows are herded together there is, again, commonly one man who has the reputation of defender of the herd, who is believed to protect the cows from the witchcraft of disgruntled individuals whether members of that small group or not. But if, at any time, a single person earns a general unpopularity in the village, whether by his pride, his meanness or by wrongdoing, then it is believed that the defenders themselves lead the spiritual attack against him, and he falls sick. Such a blast of unpopularity acting through the power of witchcraft is called the "breath of men" (*embepɔ ya vandu*); and the belief in its efficacy is one of the chief sanctions of the accepted social order of Nyakyusa life.[13]

[13] c.f. Godfrey Wilson "An African Morality" *Africa* Jan. 1936.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and Tutsi who established conquest states to the north-west.[1] 173

Whatever the origin and adventures of the heroes they were 773
important in Nyakyusa and Ngonde history because their [174]
graves became centres of religious ritual which linked together groups that were otherwise largely independent. The myths about them are the charter for chieftainship. They are depicted as benefactors who brought to uncivilized men not only the institution of chieftainship itself, but fire, cattle, iron, seed, and a creative power resident in their own bodies and those of their anointed heirs. But the myths also justify the power of commoners [778] who first occupied the country and who have witchcraft in their [754] bellies:

The commoners whom Lwembe found here were extraordinary. They 539
were cultivators, but they had not yet got fire, they ate their food raw. It was we chiefs, it was Lwembe, who brought fire and cattle—he came and found the original occupants without cattle; hence the commoners say, 'We are the earth'. Commoners are different from us physically, they are black; they are awe-inspiring, they are witches. Before you Europeans came the chiefs like Mwaipopo (116) were not [177] awe-inspiring, they feared the commoners very much; the commoners [754] hammered the chief with their fists—yes, by daylight. And if the chief [643] cut a man's bananas that man took the chief's. If the commoners were angry with Mwaipopo they fetched Mwangomo (124 whose chiefdom adjoins Mwaipopo's) at night by their witchcraft; he came in the night with his people and seized the cattle, both those of the chief, Mwaipopo, and those of the commoners. The next day the commoners said: 'It is we, we are angry. Why do you not look after us? Why do you not kill cattle for us?' Then Mwaipopo would kill two head of cattle and all the men in the country ate. . . . Mwaipopo and his equals were not awe-inspiring long ago, it is you Europeans who have created chieftainship and awe.

[1] cf. H. H. Curson and R. W. Thornton, 'A Contribution to the Study of African Native Cattle', *Onderstepoort Journal of Veterinary Science and Animal Industry*, vii, 2 October 1936 (Government Printer, Pretoria). An analysis of the distribution and migration of breeds in Africa. [113]

H. B. Thompson and R. Scott, *Uganda* (1935), pp. 195 ff.

Fülleborn, *op. cit.*, pl. 68: 69.

M. Merker, *Die Masai*, pp. 157 ff., 1904, Berlin.

H. H. Johnston, *The Uganda Protectorate*, 1904, pp. 86, 105 (early photographs of Nyoro cattle).

The short-horn type predominates among the Nyakyusa, but some animals suggest an intermixture with Sanga cattle. The hump is regarded as a great delicacy and is exaggerated in the clay cattle which boys model. Cf. Fülleborn, *op. cit.*, pl. 72. The similarity between the ritual and symbolism of the Nyakyusa and those of the Ganda as described by Roscoe is marked. J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, 1911. [231] [825] [532]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

1. CATTLE AT PASTURE

[Facing p. 14]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
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Nyakyusa

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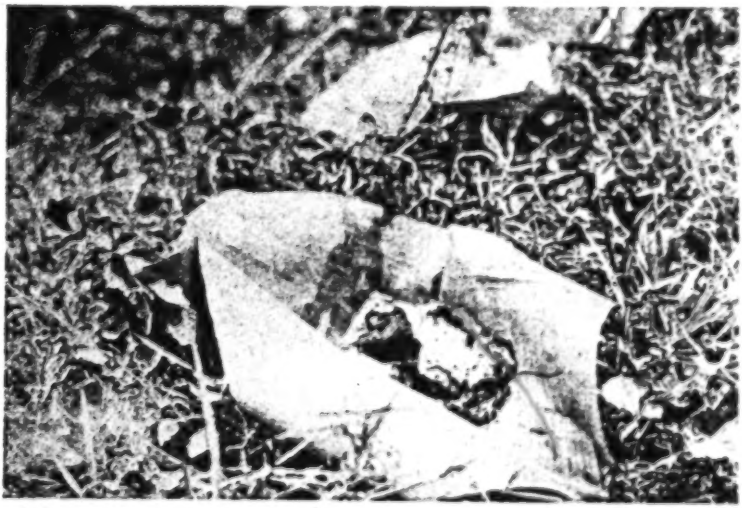
4*a*. SACRIFICE AT LUBAGA



4*b*. THE SACRIFICIAL MEAT

[facing p. 23]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

partly to the closer spacing of children. Whereas four years between births was conventional formerly, two or less is now usual. One of the characteristics of the present population is a disproportion between the sexes, the females outnumbering the males by 100 to 87·9 even when due allowance has been made for men away at work.[1] This disproportion is characteristic also of African populations in the south[2] and it appears likely that it is due to a wide difference in the survival rate of men and women, but the vital statistics necessary to test this hypothesis are lacking.

The increase in population, and the demand for coffee gardens and rice fields by men who prefer to earn cash by agriculture rather than as migrant labourers, has led to a shortage of land, already acute in the fertile lake-shore plain, and imminent in the coffee-growing villages of the hills.[3] Much land that was previously pasture land has been taken into cultivation, and signs of overstocking are everywhere apparent. Hillsides that in 1938 were covered with grass, waist high, now have a thin stubble. To aggravate matters, the care of stock is less efficient than it used to be because it is left to very small boys, their seniors being occupied with school and hoeing. Often the cattle are both ill nourished and covered with ticks—something that was never seen when they were herded by adolescents and carefully hand-dressed. The villagers themselves are as much concerned as the agricultural officers over the shortage of pasture and the decrease in the milk supply, but they are not prepared to accept the remedies recommended: namely, reduction of stock and stall-feeding. The advice of Europeans on the growing of rice and coffee crops, which they introduced to the district, is acceptable, but the Nyakyusa argue

[1] The Census figures cannot be taken as exact, but they give some indication of the increase in population, and the disproportion between men and women. In 1931 the population of Rungwe District was given as 195,060. In 1948 it was 236,386. In 1931 the proportion of males to females (Kukwe and Nyakyusa in Rungwe district) was 73·6 : 100 (Tanganyika Territory, *Census of the Native Population 1931*). In 1941 the figure for Tukuyu district as a whole was 80 : 100 (Tanganyika Territory, *East African Population Census, 1948*). Allowing for 8,800 men away without wives (estimate for 1954 less 10 per cent), the proportion is 87·9 : 100 (cf. P. H. Gulliver, Report on the Migration of African Workers to the South from the Southern Highland Province, with special Reference to the Nyakyusa of Rungwe District, February 1955, p. 16). The discrepancy in the figures given for *adults* was 60·2 : 100 in 1948, but the ages of males and females classed as 'adult' are uncertain.

[2] D. H. Houghton and E. M. Walton, *The Economy of a Native Reserve*, Keiskammahoek Rural Survey, vol. ii, pp. 24-6, 51. The sex ratio for Keiskammahoek District is 73·8 males : 100 females.

[3] cf. P. H. Gulliver, *Nyakyusa Land and Population*, 1956.

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

by horizontal bamboo joists, at right angles to the principal beams of the ceiling. This ceiling never covers the entire room, but only the greater part, and always the part directly above the hearth. Up here firewood is placed to dry. A fine black basket is hung from the ceiling above the fire. Access to the loft is by means of a ladder.

When you read reports by the 'first' Europeans on these peoples and their houses, they always refer to a round house with rectilining walls and a conical roof. Merensky (1894) mentions and illustrates such a house (pages 141 et seq.). Fülleborn (1906) mentions and illustrates several houses (Text Volume pages 376 et seq., and Atlas, plates 64–67). The inner surface of the walls of the house was decorated with patterns impressed into the mud layer which covers the bamboo poles. The three stones that form the hearth are shown, and also the bed behind a low permanent partition wall. These were exceptionally fine houses with beautiful, decorated and painted doors. The entrance had relief ornaments, often of coloured clay. Fülleborn notes that the mud houses are the dwellings of married people.

There is no doubt that the round house is the original type of dwelling. In 1955, I saw no round houses like the ones described by the above scholars, but I know that formerly they were often seen, at least as late as 1932. Professor Monica Wilson of Cape Town has told me that she saw them everywhere in 1932, but that during a visit to the district in 1955 she found only one single house of this type, in the village of Mwaiko.

At the time of my visit, round houses could be seen, but not the type having walls inclining inwards near the ground, and they were not by far as imposing as the houses mentioned above; and there were not many of them. I had the opportunity to make drawings of three houses, all occupied by old people.

The round house is called an *isinga*. In one of these *isinga* there lived an old man whose wife, Malia, lived across the courtyard in a rectangular hut of the old Nyakyusa type (see infra). The husband's house was 6.5 metres across, and was divided in halves by a fence made from sticks. One half was where the man lived; it had one bed for him, and one for his grandchildren, who would come to visit him, now and then. Near the wall were two iron chests; also, a board had been hung at the wall as a roost for the chicken. A hen's nest, a small wicker basket, was placed about 3 ft. above the floor in the fireation of a four or five-pronged stick. These hen's nests are seen in all houses. The ceiling was supported by seven upright posts, seemingly placed entirely at random. The under side of the roof was strengthened by eight circular-running fascines of bamboo. In the centre, a heavy log (not bamboo) reached up to the pointed top of the roof.

The other half of the house was reserved for the cattle, three cows and two calves; there were five posts to which the cattle were tied at night.

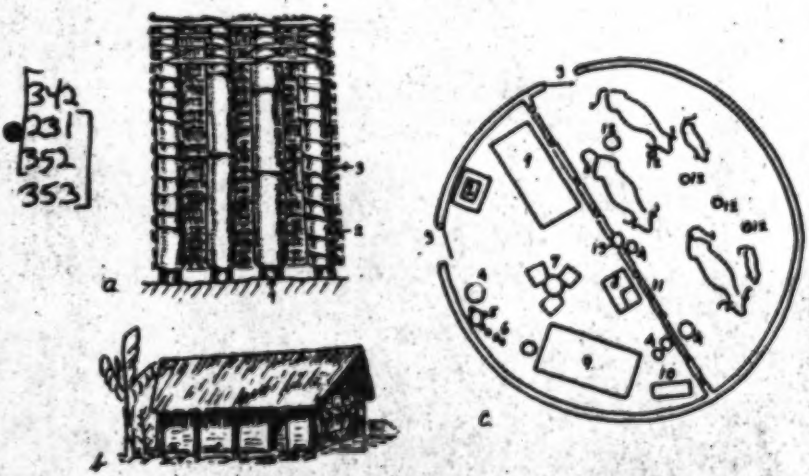
The house had an outer door at each end, but there was no passage from the man's half to that of the cattle.

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

parts. The partition wall was bamboo and mud. A doorway gave on to the inner part, where Tufwene had her bed.

There were two hearths, one in each room. The front one was not used. In the outer room was a bed for guests—a common feature of all houses. Tufwene was thought to be well off, and she had plenty of carrying rings, used by the women when they carry loads, often very heavy, on their heads. The inner room was used for stores, including a number of earthen jars. She had three very fine, low stools. I saw them outside in the sun, but their usual place was no doubt in the outer room, which had the character of a workroom. Here were the large wooden mortar and its long pestle; also the grinding stone and in a corner the small mat, the *ulyanya*, which is used to take up the newly ground flour. There was also the ladder, used for fetching down firewood from the loft; you could see the hen's nest, and the large water jar with its pointed bottom placed on three stones.

The third *isinga* belonged to an eighty-year-old woman whose husband had died. She told me how every day she would fill a fine, decorated bamboo mug with milk for him! These mugs, seen in all the houses, mostly have geometrical



Houses belonging to Malia Ulinyelusya and her husband.

a. Detail of *isinga*, outer wall. 1, tree fern stem joined to bamboo pole—note aperture for liquid manure; 2, bamboo pole with plant fibre windings; 3, split bamboo.—b, Malia's *ibanga*. —c. Plan of *isinga*. 1, bed of the man; 2, iron chests for garments; 3, door; 4, posts supporting ceiling; 5, hen's nest; 6, hoes and pestle for the maize mortar; 7, hearth; 8, chests; 9, bed of the grand-children; 10, roost from hollowed out trunk; 11, low partition; 12, posts for tying cattle; 13, centre post to top of roof.

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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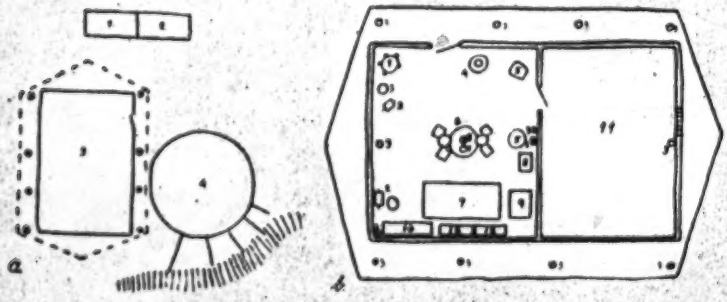
patterns burned into the bamboo; they are hung upside down so the dust will not settle in them. The bottom is the natural partition of the bamboo cane.

The house was standing on high, slightly slanting ground, and like the first mentioned house it was buttressed by a great number of thick branches. Incidentally, it seemed to be very old and rickety. Inside, there were a great many posts supporting the horizontal bamboo ceiling and the stores of firewood. All posts were bifurcated and held the beams solidly in place. The diameter of the house was the usual 6.5 metres, but in this case there was no inner partition. As this woman was very poor, she had no bed, but slept on a mat on the floor. Only very rarely is there no bed in the houses; I remember having seen this only three times.

The hearth was the usual type: three decorated square stones, rising to a height of 30 cm above the floor, but being sunk 70 cm into the ground. Here they were positioned on one side, to ensure that the centre post would not catch fire, and to make for easy escape of the smoke through the doorway. None of the houses have other means of smoke outlet.

Alongside the wall were calabashes, jars, and baskets; material for the baskets; and a little away from the wall, the large mill-stone and its appurtenant smaller grinding stone. A hen's nest was not missing either. Along one side was fitted a small under-ceiling for the storage of small things. Two or three bananas, meant to be her next meal, were lying on the floor near one of the posts. From the loft she reached down a calfskin in which she had been carrying her child. Its inside was of a reddish colour.



a. Site plan of Malia Ulinyelusya's houses. 1, hen-coop; 2, drying-racks for crops; 3, Malia's *ilibaga* with roof supports along sides; 4, *isinga* belonging to Malia's husband, with buttresses at low ground.—b. Plan of Malia's *ilibaga* (barred window in back room). 1, hen's nest; 2, *ikitela* (stool); 3, posts (those going up to ridge of roof are filled in); 4, large basket; 5, basket; 6, clay base round twin posts; 7, Malia's bed; 8, chest; 9, wooden chest; 10, table; 11, back room, having bamboo ceiling carried by bamboo cross beam (between posts marked 3); the room is used for storing clothes, etc.; 12, shelves.

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17 Nyakyusa

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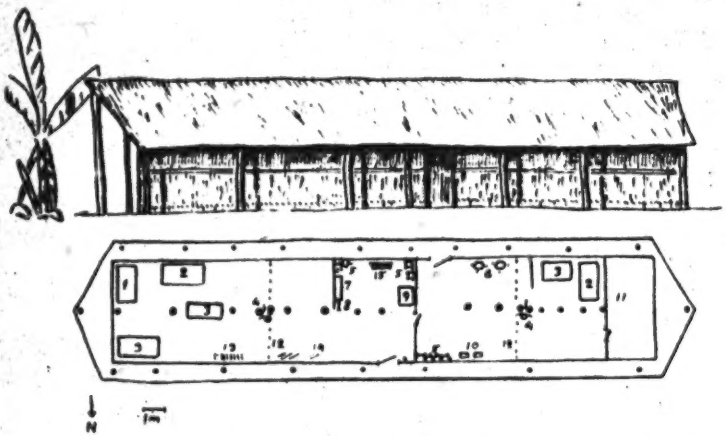

An *ikibaga* in the village of Kisondela, the district of Rutengalo, belonging to a man with two wives. The rooms have bamboo ceilings from dotted lines to either gable. Posts reaching to ridge of roof are filled in. 1, husband's bed; 2, wife's bed; 3, child's bed; 4, hearth; 5, hens' nests; 6, water jar; 7, roost; 8, ladder; 9, table; 10, stools; 11, store-room; 12, dotted lines show limitation of ceiling; 13, small objects; 14, working material; 15, sleeping mat.

born. On page 357, he reports how the boys, when 7 or 10 years old, will leave their parents' house to live in long, rectangular cowhouse-like houses big or small, in a special youngsters' quarter at the far end of the village. On page 358 he writes: In many cases you do not know for certain whether you are dealing with a youngsters' house or a cowhouse—for the cattle may well be kept in these houses—or the herdsmen may sleep in the cowhouses. However, this mostly holds true of the low-lying Konde country, while on the other hand, in the high country, the cattle is usually kept in the dwelling houses. On pages 371 and 372, he relates how the cattle is tied to posts at night, and he shows a picture of a cowhouse.

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He also refers (on page 376) to the use of the rectangular house for married men besides the boys. The difference is seen in the fact that these houses are not roughcast with mud, as this work is the province of women. Finally, he reports that, during the last few years of his stay in the Konde country, he saw Konde houses being built under increasing influence of the coastal culture, in imitation of the Swahili houses. They were roughcast with mud inside and out, and had a verandah supported by posts.

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In 1935, many *ikabagas* could be seen. Some were for the cattle, but most were dwelling houses for married people. (Boys aged 7–10 and upwards until the marriageable age lived in ramshackle boys' houses, the material of which was not bamboo, but a thinner grass, resembling bamboo very much. These houses stood

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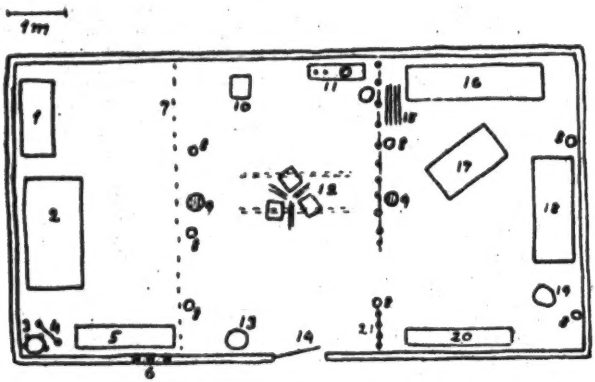

Iselina's house. 1, cupboard with shelves; 2, children's bed; 3, hen's nest; 4, ladder; 5, roost; 6, barred window; 7, from dotted line towards the right is the bamboo ceiling; 8, from here issue 5 horisontal bamboo sticks on which the bamboo ceiling is supported; 9, Posts supporting roof; 10, chair; 11, low shelf with two bamboo jars and a water jar; 12, hearth with three hearthstones and sticks under ceiling for carrying the fine basket, and corn-cobs hung up to dry, etc.; 13, beer jar; 14, door; 15, mats behind the low partition; 16, shelf for domestic utensils; 17, child's bed; 18, Iselina's bed; 19, baskets; 20, domestic utensils; 21, low partition between rooms.

found. In the front part of the Kikoła house, serving as an entrance room, were four posts called *fikingi*, to which two cows were tied at night.

This part, which we may call the cowhouse, also housed hen's nests, the roost, [231] and the mortar to be used for maize, etc.

The hearth, consisting of one square and two round hearthstones, was placed [354] in the centre of the living-room part. Here were also water jars and the woman's bed. This means that even if this type of house had a roof of a different shape and was always provided with a verandah with posts supporting its roof, the interior was really designed on the same lines as the short *ikibaga*, but it was [542] meant to house only one woman, or one man, as we shall see below.

We may imagine that one of the reasons why the type of roof was changed, 342 was the weakness of the pointed roof of the *ikibaga*. It could often be seen to have 178 a tendency to fall in, and had to be supported by a post. Even in Fülleborn's illustrations, e.g. plate 64 c, a kind of reinforcement can be seen at the edge of the roof. No doubt the roof of the *ihema* does not suffer to the same extent from this flaw.

New houses were being built to this design, and I suppose that a little more 342 than half the number of the houses were of the *ikibaga* type, and a little than half the *ihema*.

In the village of Ilolo, I surveyed three houses belonging to one family, a [361]

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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233 343 462 [413] the women, but the men are responsible for keeping the floor of the stable in good repair. For this purpose a specific tool is used, called *ukutoba indobelu*. It is round on top, flattened on the lower side and provided with a handle.

224 *5. Hunting.* Sometimes the Nyakyusa go out to hunt, but nowadays hunting is much more restricted than in former times as described e. g by Mackenzie in his book: "The spirit-ridden Konde" (London 1925). This record, however, deals mostly with the Ngonde of the environment of Karonga whose interesting social history was unsurpassably revealed to us by Mr. Godfrey Wilson's treatise: "The Constitution of Ngonde" (The Rhodes-Livingstone Papers, Number Three. Livingstone, Northern Rhodesia 1939.) Hunting in the Nyakyusa country is now [656] curtailed by governmental regulations. Hunting *(ukufuema)*, therefore, does not supply an essential part of the food requirements of the [136] natives. The colobus apes on the slopes of the Rungwe volcano and the [656] Poroto Mountains are sometimes killed for their attractive black and white skins, but fortunately this is now forbidden by the government. [439] Otherwise these apes would be exterminated in quite a short time, since the skins of these apes are in great demand with some Europeans for rugs and covers. Naturally, the hunting of lions and especially of leopards, which even nowadays still cause great damage, is not restricted.

224 ● 231 The hunting of game for food is often done with dogs *(imbwa)* which have small bells *(inyesi)* on collars round their necks. Thereby the hunter *(umfuemi)* always knows the whereabouts of his dog. The chase is continued till the dog or dogs are exhausted. The object of the hunt *(umfuemu)* is generally a small type of antelope *(akasya)*, e. g. in the [656] environment of Mwakalele, as I was instructed. The usual time for hunting is the cooler season, but to-day a permit of the government is also required.

223 Catching birds by means of traps *(untegu*, pl. *imitegu)* is still common in the Nyakyusa area. I have also seen such traps constructed by means of the flicking-gallow's principle also in the vicinity of Utengule among the Safwa. The herd boys especially set traps to catch quails *(imbesi)* when the *malesi* (millet) harvest is over. Sometimes smaller birds are also coursed until they are exhausted and then slain. One day I found a stick vertically put on the soil and with a triangle made of smaller sticks at its top. The horizontal part of which was smeared with an adhesive substance. I was told that this was a trap for birds,

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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the figures. Also bicycles, aeroplanes, motor-cars and other striking objects of the European civilization are to be found represented and concentric white circles adjacent to these drawings or paintings.

14. Houses. Sometimes the upper portion of the framework of the rectangular houses is not fully plastered with mud leaving broad open areas or strips horizontally or slopingly to the base-line. This may have its origin in an artistic motive and at the same time be useful in ventilating the interior of the hut. The ancient custom of the Nyakyusa to fill out the spaces between the framework of the walls with flat, oval cakes or clods of clay, supported inside the house by a second framework of bamboo *(uvumango)*, has also a decorative effect.

The preparation of those oval sun-dried clay cakes is the work of the women. L. Monteith Fotheringham described this in his "Adventures in Nyasaland" (London 1891, p. 22) with the following words: "The women make the bricks in shape like large eggs by pressing the clay between their hands." The building of the framework of the hut and the thatching of the roof is the task of the men. Nyumba means "the house" in Kinyakyusa as wellas in Swahili; *isyenga* is the name for the old-fashioned hut of the Nyakyusa possessing a round baseline and a framework expanding upwards in diameter. The rectangular hut is called *ikibaga* and the smaller rectangular hut used as a store or a fowl pen, *akabaga*. It is interesting to note that there is no special word for roof in Kinyakyusa. This part of the hut or house is simply called "the above" *(iyuru)*. In contrast to this fact the different poles of the roof-structure are specially named according to their position parallel to or at right angels to the ridge of the rectangular houses. *Ukutalike* means to bind the different rafters of the roof together; *imbanda* is the name for the supporting poles of the roof, and *inyengo* for the poles of the framework of the walls.

15. Outfit. Inside the house we find besides the bedsteads *(ikitara,* pl. *ifitara)* and the household utensils, the grinding-mill *(uruwara)*, consisting of an upper (smaller) and a lower (broader) stone. The flour falls into a basket placed in front of the mill. Sometimes in a corner of the hut a nest *(ikitero)* for a sitting hen on top of a pole is to be found. Outside the house is a place for the sweepings *(urutagililo)*. The cleaning of the interior of the houses and also the repairing of the mud plaster is the task of the women, but I saw men cleaning the space in front of the huts. At any case, it must be acknowledged that the cleanliness of a Nyakyusa village leaves little to be desired.